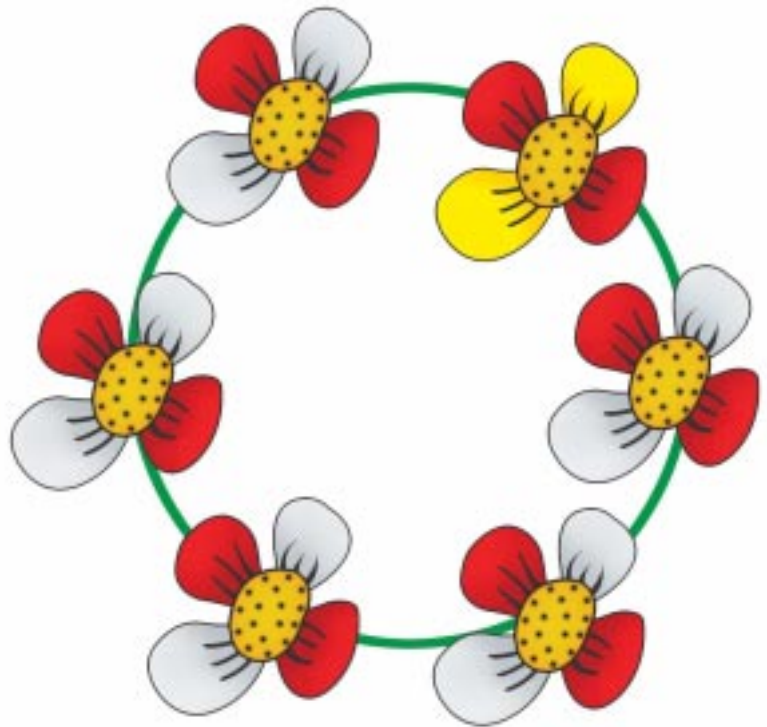


EXAMPLES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

PAKISTAN



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FOREWORD

The obstacles to a good education faced by millions of children in South Asia are daunting enough. For the 10% of the region's young people who are estimated to have some kind of disability, the barriers are compounded. The UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia has looked at examples in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka of how such children are given schooling, and whether this is the type of education they have the right to expect. The result is a very mixed bag indeed.


Overall it is clear that large numbers of children who struggle daily with additional hardships are not getting the chance to improve their lives through education. This means, of course, they are caught in a spiral of low expectation, low esteem and low income.

The minority of children with disability that do get places are often not sitting in the same classroom as other boys and girls because of a sense that they need to be separated and treated differently. Globally it is estimated that 70% of children with disabilities, including those with mild mental retardation, can attend regular schools provided the environment is designed to be accessible and the institution is willing to accommodate them.

UNICEF believes that the goal should be to enable all children to have full participation in the development of their community. Meeting this goal of inclusion requires all structures and community-based services to be accessible to all members of the community without discrimination.

By producing a snapshot on the activities happening in five South Asian countries UNICEF Regional Office hopes to fill in an information gap on children with disabilities while examining misconceptions, prejudices and discriminatory practices. The documents on each of the five countries examine initiatives being undertaken by governments, NGOs, INGOs, and UN agencies. Crucially they highlight good practices that have proved effective in addressing concerns and constraints.

It is hoped these documents will be a starting point for policies and practices that get many more children with disabilities into school. As we all work to fulfill the Millennium Development Goal of 'Education for All' I would urge that the exclusion of the challenged child be specifically addressed with initiatives aimed at ending prejudice and isolation. UNICEF ROSA will work with experts to pull together the ideas captured in the five documents with the hope that this process will facilitate momentum toward the full inclusion of every child in all that their community has to offer.



Dr Sadig Rasheed
UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia

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ACRONYMS

IED	Institute of Educational Development
INGO	international non-governmental organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNICEF's Medium-Term Strategic Plan for 2002-05, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, spells out that a long-term goal of UNICEF is that 'all children have access to and complete an education of good quality'. While the human rights principle of universality means that the well-being of all children is important, applying a rights-based approach to programming must prioritize the needs of the most disadvantaged. This study focuses on policies and practices in education for children with disabilities in Pakistan. The work also documents initiatives that are practicing inclusive education in Pakistan.

Several initiatives have been taken by governments, NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and others for addressing the special educational needs of children with disabilities. Some have demonstrated successful models of special and inclusive education. However, a comprehensive analysis of these initiatives has not yet been undertaken in Pakistan. This study will draw on good practice models of special needs and inclusive education to increase the knowledge base and strengthen the capacity to develop or improve existing programmes in this area. It is also expected to serve as an advocacy tool for promoting inclusive education.

The regular government school system in Pakistan functions independently of the special school system. Such segregation is also evident in schools run by the private sector. Teaching methods enhance the learning ability of the individual child in a limited manner. The system does not usually allow for a participatory role by the child nor does it stress the development of his/her creative and critical thinking ability. Students are expected to obey the teacher.

Inclusive schools that demonstrate good practices in Pakistan are restricted to big cities in the private sector. Most are not accessible to children with disabilities living in remote or rural areas. In these areas, there is limited accessibility to special educational facilities. Also, parents are not willing to send their challenged children to school, as they fear that they will be stigmatized or that their children will not be able to keep up with the class. In some places, school directors or teachers refuse to accept a child with moderate disability for these types of reasons. Distance and other problems related to commuting to school add to the difficulties for these children.

History reveals that the education of children with special needs was mainly in the hands of religious institutions. At the time of independence, only a few schools were functioning for the education of children and adults with disabilities. Following independence, some private institutions became active in providing educational opportunities to children with special needs. The National Commission on Education in 1959 placed the education of disabled children on the government agenda for the first time. It recommended the provision of vocational education for children and adults with mental retardation, and training of teachers for the education of children with disabilities. The Education Policy of 1972 provided funds for special education. In the 1980s and 1990s, the UN asked member states to pay special attention to the problems of people with disabilities. During this period, the Government of Pakistan significantly increased the budget allocation to newly established special education centres and other institutions for the education

and rehabilitation of children with disabilities. Government initiatives resulted in more than 200 special education institutions with more than 20,000 enrolments.

The attitude of society in Pakistan to people with disabilities is generally positive. It is more favourable in rural areas than in urban areas. However, lack of knowledge about the capability of disabled people results in a low profile for children with disabilities. Lack of educational facilities exacerbates their problems. In 1994, the Salamanca Statement called on the international community to endorse the approach of inclusive schooling, and to support the development of special needs education as an integral part of all education programmes. It asked the UN and its specialized agencies-UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank-for endorsement, and to 'strengthen their inputs for technical cooperation' and improve their networking for more efficient support to integrated special needs provision. NGOs were asked to strengthen their collaboration with official national bodies and become more involved in all aspects of inclusive education.

There are ongoing debates in Pakistan regarding the promotion of inclusive education. Opponents of inclusive education argue that the people responsible for formulating policy are, generally speaking, international experts who are ignorant of the situation that prevails in the country. Those attempting to apply inclusive education at the grassroots have tried to implement indigenous methods to educate challenged children.

Teachers, administrators, professionals and parents are aware of the concept of inclusive education, but are not sure how it is implemented in an ordinary setting. It is important to keep in mind the extent of public education at the primary level if an effective plan for inclusive education is going to be implemented. The number of primary schools in the public sector in Pakistan is 106,275 (Bureau of Statistics, 1998), and there are 278,051 teachers working in these schools. The federal Ministry of Education will have to make modifications to school environments, adapt the curriculum for special needs, and train teachers in order to build their capacity for undertaking the challenge of inclusive schooling. For this purpose, sufficient financial resources, new infrastructure and a new vision of education for all are facilitating elements.

Various research studies have pointed out that lack of awareness and education among the general public have been major reasons for misconceptions and negative attitudes towards disability. General belief, however, is that education can bring change in the life of children with disabilities. Surveys of teachers working in regular schools, parents of children with and without disabilities, and other decision-makers indicate that they are willing to accept inclusive education, if professional support and additional financial resources for the improvement of schools are made available.

Inclusive education is a new concept; a few schools are striving to create an inclusive environment through experimentation with various approaches. These approaches include establishing new inclusive schools; giving access to children with disabilities to existing schools; persuading children without disabilities to join special education institutions; keeping children with special needs within regular school although in separate classrooms; and supporting schools with multi-grade inclusive classrooms.

Information about such institutions is not available from traditional sources. Government departments dealing with special needs and departments of special education at various universities were the main sources of such information.

Criteria for identifying good practice models of inclusive education are based on parameters such as accessibility of all children to school, environment, learners, teachers and teacher training, curriculum and learning materials, teaching-learning process, learning outcomes, community support, and supervision. Five schools are documented in this study as well as an outreach programme and teacher development initiatives. Data were collected from schools, learners, teachers, community members, governmental officials and grassroots workers by using semi-structured interviews and observation.

The key findings of the study are as follows:

- No serious movement has so far surfaced in the country for inclusive education. The present system is of ordinary schools and special schools working in isolation, striving independently for improvement and identity.
- At the federal level, the implications for inclusive education have been recognized in principle, but have not been fully incorporated in practice.
- There is a lack of comprehensive data on the educational status of children with disabilities.
- Even with the help of international consultants, efforts for integration are confined to the small pilot projects with limited scope.
- Some private institutions have become interested in inclusive education. They have started including special needs children in their schools but have not paid adequate attention to disability-friendly infrastructure development, professional training of teaching staff, use of appropriate teaching-learning methods, etc.
- The attitudes of the society, including parents of children with and without disabilities, are generally in favour of inclusive education.
- There is a gap between rhetoric and reality because teachers and administrators employed in special schools are not willing to innovate.
- Government is taking cognizance of such needs; this is reflected in the newly approved National Policy for Special Education. Sufficient funds have been allocated in the next 10-year perspective plan for this purpose.
- There is a lack of coordination between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education for meeting the needs of children with disabilities and those belonging to other marginalized groups.
- The private sector is willing to cater to the needs of disabled children, and is awaiting a constructive plan from the government.
- Some teachers are willing to offer their services, provided they are properly trained.
- It would be premature to label the schools selected in the study as good practice models. These schools have been selected because of their pioneering attempts to meet the needs of disabled children in ordinary schools.

The following recommendations are made:

- It is important to recognize that research indicates that it is less costly to provide education for disabled children in mainstream inclusive schools rather than establishing special schools. The additional/marginal cost to transform mainstream schools to inclusive ones is minimal and affordable for the government.
- There is a need to improve coordination between of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education with the ultimate aim of shifting the portfolio of education of children with disabilities and other marginalized groups to the Ministry of Education.
- National sample surveys should provide a comprehensive database on the magnitude and educational status of children with disabilities in terms of types of disability, age, sex, location, etc. Care should be taken to involve trained personnel in data collection.
- The private sector has taken a lead in promoting and implementing inclusive education. There is a need to support these efforts by providing grants from the government and international donor agencies.
- Departments of special education at university level should be assigned the task of training teachers working in inclusive schools through short training courses and workshops.
- Orientation and awareness programmes should be given to all sections of the Ministry of Education to help plan for inclusion of children with special needs according to international standards. Since this initiative will have some financial impact on the economy of the country, an advanced plan can be prepared for phased spending. Rural primary schools in remote areas should receive preference, and should be encouraged to start inclusive education in the first phase.
- International donor agencies funding social development projects should take up the promotion of inclusive education as a first priority, and provide financial and technical support to the government, NGOs and the private sector.
- There should be legislation that makes it compulsory for every public school to admit all children irrespective of their special needs. However, at the initial stages, severely mentally retarded children or children with severe physical handicaps may be referred to a special school.
- The print and electronic media should be used to prepare proactive perceptions for the community including parents. Various associations working for drama and cultural events can be involved on a regular basis in monitoring how characters and stories project disability.
- Private ordinary schools funded by national and international agencies should be asked to start inclusive education. Furthermore, implementing inclusive education should be made a pre-condition for disbursement of grants.

- In-depth research should be undertaken regularly to investigate the constraints and difficulties faced in implementing inclusive practices in Pakistan.
- There should be coordination among the health units, special schools and ordinary schools. Coordination committees comprising the leaders of these three systems should be established at the district level.
- The education policy of the government should clearly set out the agenda for finding the most practical, cost-effective ways of meeting the needs of all children in ordinary schools.

INTRODUCTION

UNICEF's Medium-Term Strategic Plan for 2002–05, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, spells out that a long-term goal of UNICEF is that 'all children have access to and complete an education of good quality'. While the human rights principle of universality means that the well-being of all children is important, applying a rights-based approach to programming means the needs of the most disadvantaged must be prioritized, particularly in countries that have greatest need. Disadvantaged children may include the girl child, those belonging to low castes, children in remote areas, those with disabilities, those who are refugees/internally displaced persons or returnees, children affected by armed conflict, and those who are subjected to abuse and exploitation.

This study focuses on policies and practices in education for children with disabilities in Pakistan. The work also documents initiatives that are practicing inclusive education in Pakistan. Children with disabilities are often silent and invisible members of many communities. They can be at risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect. There is a scarcity of data on children with disabilities in South Asia, and their needs are seldom articulated in policies and programmes. They often encounter barriers in accessing adequate and appropriate services, including education. The vast majority of children with disabilities never attend schools, and a large percentage of the ones that do soon drop out as a result of inaccessible school infrastructure and an unfriendly school environment.

It must be recognized that individual children learn and develop in different ways and at different paces. So it is important to create a learning environment that responds to the needs of every child, including those with disabilities. There is a growing consensus among professionals and disability rights organizations that inclusion in mainstream schooling is the appropriate way to provide education for all children. Promoting inclusive education means support services will be brought to the child, rather than moving the child to the support services; teachers and classrooms will have to adapt rather than forcing the child to change.

Several initiatives have been taken by the Government of Pakistan, NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and others for addressing the special educational needs of children with disabilities. Some have demonstrated successful models of special and inclusive education. However, a comprehensive analysis of these initiatives has not yet been undertaken. This study will draw on good practice models of special needs and inclusive education to increase the knowledge base and strengthen the capacity to develop or improve existing programmes in this area. It is also expected to serve as an advocacy tool for promoting inclusive education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are as follows.

- To assess the state of special needs and inclusive education in Pakistan in terms of policies, resources and practices, and emphasize the main implications of the lessons learnt with respect to policy reform.
- To identify and document model practices in the area of inclusive education, and to highlight the mechanisms and strategies that have proved effective, the areas of concern, and the constraints in successfully mainstreaming children with disabilities.
- To provide recommendations based on the lessons learnt in order to strengthen the capacity of the government and other partners in the country to bring about policy reforms, ensure adequate resource allocation, and promote programming that supports inclusive education.

METHODOLOGY

Identification of inclusive schools

Most schools in Pakistan are crowded and poorly equipped. The pedagogical methods applied in mainstream, special and inclusive schools are largely copying and memorizing. The teaching–learning process addresses the individual learning needs of children in a limited way, and there is little scope for creativity or critical thinking. Students are expected to obey the teacher. There are some schools that still practice corporal punishment.

Inclusive schools that demonstrate good practices in Pakistan are restricted to big cities in the private sector. Most are not accessible to children with disabilities living in remote or rural areas. Special education support is usually not available to disabled children in rural areas. Parents are not willing to send their challenged children to school, as they fear that they will be stigmatized or that their children will not be able to keep up with the class. In some places, school directors or teachers refuse to accept a child with moderate disability for these types of reasons. Distance and other problems related to commuting to school add to the difficulties for these children. Against this background, it was difficult to find good practice models of mainstream schools, let alone inclusive schools, in the country.

Inclusive education is a new concept; a few schools are striving to create an inclusive environment through experimentation with various approaches. These approaches include establishing new inclusive schools; giving access to children with disabilities to existing schools; persuading children without disabilities to join special education institutions; keeping children with special needs within regular school although in separate classrooms; and supporting schools with multi-grade inclusive classrooms.

Information about such institutions is not available from traditional sources. For the purpose of this study, the following departments/ministries were consulted to identify good practice models, as these institutions conduct studies on innovative efforts in special education.

- Directorate General of Special Education, Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education, Islamabad.
- Department of Special Education, University of Karachi, Karachi.
- Department of Special Education, University of the Punjab, Lahore.
- Department of Special Education, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.
- Directorate of Social Welfare, Social Welfare Department, Government of NWFP, Peshawar.

To supplement information received from these sources, especially with reference to rural and suburban areas, an advertisement was published in two daily newspapers with high circulation, namely, the Daily Jang (Urdu) and the Daily Dawn (English). An invitation was extended to all organizations and individuals involved in efforts of any form in inclusive education to send their name and a brief description of their work so it could be assessed and documented.

Within this scenario, it is not possible to conclude that the schools covered in this report are models of good practice. These 'nearly' good practices were selected as examples of inclusive schools that show that all children, including those with disabilities, can be accommodated in ordinary schools. The school policy of these institutions is to include children with disabilities. They have created a welcoming and accessible environment for children with special needs. Such conditions are considered to be important for establishing an inclusive school. Schools with commitment by the principal and supportive teachers have given the opportunity for all children, including those with disabilities, to interact, communicate and respect each other. Children with disabilities can attend regular schools from their homes instead of staying in boarding schools or being isolated in special schools. This process of inclusive schooling is expected to change society's mindset, and encourage many families to send children with or without disabilities to such schools.

The schools and other institutions included in the study are as follows:

- International School of Studies, Karachi.
- Collegiate School System, Lahore.
- Parvarish School, Lahore.
- Hassan Academy, Rawalpindi/Islamabad.
- Association for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Disabled, Peshawar.
- Amin Maktab (outreach programme).
- Teacher development initiatives.

Collection of data

The criteria for identifying good practice models are based on the following parameters.

- Accessibility of all children to school
- Environment
- Learners
- Teachers and teacher training

- Curriculum and learning materials
- Teaching–learning process
- Learning outcomes
- Community support
- Supervision

Major constraints of the practices were also highlighted.

School practices were documented using the above parameters. Checklists and semi-structured interviews were used to collect primary information about inclusive practices. Discussions were carried out with teachers, parents, children with disabilities and peers. The views of NGOs, government officials and professionals were also accounted for by conducting interviews. Secondary information on the status of special needs education and inclusive education was collected from government documents, reports and other literature. The nature of the investigation was quantitative and qualitative.

Limitation of the study

The newspaper advertisement failed to create the expected response. Only four institutions from across the whole country responded. The poor response may have been because the advertisements appeared at the time of the election and did not attract a sufficient audience, or because there are not many institutions in country practising any form of inclusive education. However, the advertisement gave an opportunity to all who might have been interested to be included in the study.

EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN PAKISTAN

The history of education for children with special needs dates back to the British period in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. A school was established in Lahore in 1906 to cater for educational and vocational needs of children and adults with visual impairment. Another school, Ida Rio, for children with hearing impairment was set up in Karachi in 1923. Children and adults with disabilities were generally excluded from the regular school system. School-going children with special needs were gradually and deliberately pushed out of the school system because school administrators and teachers were not familiar with the learning needs and abilities of these children. Schools lacked the flexibility and expertise to make room for them. Children were classified and placed in separate special schools away from their family and peers. This led to the development of two systems of education that in turn led to children being isolated from each other within the same society. The only exceptions to such segregation were indigenous systems such as the system of religious education (*deeni madari*).

After Pakistan gained independence, some private institutions became active in providing educational opportunities for children with special needs. The parents of children with hearing impairments in Lahore, for example, established the Deaf and Dumb Welfare Society. This society opened a school for the education of children with hearing impairments called the Gung Mahal (Palace for the Deaf). The main emphasis was on vocational education rather than general education, and the curriculum differed from that in public schools. In the late 1950s, the categorization of people with exceptionalities into separate groups and their institutionalization began receiving criticism from professionals as it removed people with disabilities from the cultural norm.

The first government endorsement of education of children with special needs can be traced back to a report of the National Commission on Education in 1959. The report recommended the provision of vocational education for children and adults with mental retardation, as no such facility was being offered in the public or private sector. The commission also recommended that teachers of children with disabilities should be trained in their specialized field.

Prior to the UN's Decade of the Disabled (1983–92), special education was mainly in the hands of NGOs and religious institutions. Religious institutions have a long tradition of providing equal access to children with special needs on the subcontinent. It is estimated that there are more than 10,000 religious institutions in Pakistan imparting education to 1.5 million students (Bureau of Statistics, 1998). Most of these students come from the middle and lower-middle classes, and the institutional services include education, food, shelter and health care.

SITUATION OF DISABILITY IN PAKISTAN

According to the census for 1998, there are 3,286,630 people with disability constituting 2.54 per cent of the population (Bureau of Statistics, 1998). The figure is underestimated, as the definition of disability did not include moderate and mild disability. Data collectors for the census were not trained to identify and classify all forms of disability.

A survey of the prevalence of special needs children sponsored by the WHO in 1985 indicated that 10 per cent of the population had some sort of disability, such as emotional disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental retardation, physical disability, learning disability or multiple disability. Of these, only two per cent had access to institutional facilities (Shahzadi, 2000).

Data reveal that 55.7 per cent of disabled people are found in Punjab, followed by 28.4 per cent in Sindh, 11.1 per cent in NWFP, 4.5 per cent in Baluchistan, and 0.3 per cent in Islamabad (Bureau of Statistics, 1998). Most disabled people have a physical handicap; this is followed by hearing impairment. The number of males with disability is greater than females in both rural and urban areas (Table 1). This is probably because of the high incidence of child mortality among female children caused by social discrimination, preference for the male child, and deep-rooted gender insensitivity within households. More resources are used for rearing infant boys than infant girls. Thus, if a girl child is disabled she is doubly disadvantaged as she will receive less nutritious food, health care and attention within the family and will often die young. Among adults, the number of physically disabled males is higher than the number of physically disabled females as the incidence of accidents in the household as well as in the workforce is much higher for men.

Table 1: Percentage of population with disability by nature, sex and area									
Nature of disability	All Areas			Rural			Urban		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
All	2.54	2.85	2.21	2.52	2.83	2.19	2.59	2.88	2.26
Blind	8.06	7.61	8.68	7.92	7.44	8.59	8.32	7.93	8.88
Deaf and hard of hearing	7.43	7.27	7.66	7.53	7.40	7.71	7.24	7.02	7.56
Physically handicap	18.93	19.84	17.65	20.52	21.40	19.30	15.81	16.83	14.34
Severely mentally retarded	6.39	6.22	6.63	5.94	5.72	6.23	7.28	7.18	7.44
Mentally retarded	7.60	7.02	8.41	7.32	6.78	8.07	8.15	7.50	9.62
Having more than one disability	8.23	7.33	9.48	8.23	7.37	9.41	8.22	4.25	9.60
Others	43.36	44.71	41.49	42.55	43.89	40.69	44.97	46.29	43.07

Source: Bureau of Statistics, 1998.

The number of people with disabilities is greater in urban areas than in rural areas. A possible explanation is that the incidence of mortality is higher in rural areas than in urban areas because of the lack of facilities such as safe water, sanitation, health services, etc. However, the number of people with hearing and physical disability is greater in rural areas than in urban areas. Besides heredity, one significant cause of hearing disabilities is disease. Illnesses such as typhoid, small pox, polio, pneumonia, meningitis, measles and scabies, which are linked to hearing disability, are more common in rural areas, and their treatment in such areas is also limited.

'Others' in Table 1 include people with severe learning disabilities, autism and emotional disability. It has already been mentioned that census surveyors probably did not have the expertise to classify all other categories of disability, and clustered them together in 'others'.

Of the total population with disability, 0.82 million (24.8 per cent) are of school-going age (5-14 years in Pakistan). It is estimated that about 20,000 children with disability aged 5-20 years-2.4 per cent of the total-were enrolled in special schools (Bureau of Statistics, 1998).

MISCONCEPTIONS, PREJUDICES, DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES

Research has revealed variations in the perceptions and attitudes of children, parents, teachers, administrators, the media and society at large towards disability. Differences in viewpoints are also seen across types of disability, among literate and non-literate respondents, and those living in rural and urban areas.

Studies focusing on the perception of children with disabilities revealed that they like to study with other children but are unsure of their capabilities and fear the reaction of other children. Hayat (1994) found that most children who have disabilities were eager to attend ordinary schools as they found it pleasant to study and play with other children. They believed that this would improve their academic achievement and remove the stigma associated with disability. However, they feared that they might be teased or not be able to keep up with the class. Batool and Mehmood (2000) found that children with visual disability expressed similar views.

In a study on problems faced by children with physical disabilities in ordinary educational institutions, Noor and Khokhar (2002) concluded that these children were satisfied with the positive attitude of administrators, the efforts of their teachers to solve their problems, and their level of participation in classroom discussion. However, they faced difficulties in commuting to school, and moving with ease in school buildings.

Miles (1983) found that the attitude of society towards children with disabilities was not considerate. The reasons for this are mainly superstitious. Disability is seen as a curse or punishment from God, and sometimes it is associated with invasion by an evil spirit.

While studying the attitudes of literate and non-literate persons, Akhtar (1994) reported that most literate respondents believed that children with hearing disabilities could lead a successful life. Non-literate respondents, however, often believed that disability was a curse. They believed that children with disabilities were a burden on society.

Majid and Khan (1994) reported that parents and teachers did not share the same concerns on educating children with visual disability. Parents were keen to admit children to special schools, and were optimistic about the future of their children. However, teachers were sceptical about teaching them in mainstream schools. In another study, Akhtar (1994) found that most parents believed that the disability would not affect the career development of their children or their

pursuance of a married life. As in the earlier study, most teachers of mainstream schools felt unsure about teaching these children. Teachers in special schools believed that the most appropriate education for these children could only be provided in special schools.

Nawaz and Saeed (1999) conducted a study of perceptions of primary school teachers and found that they were willing to include children who had difficulties in hearing in their schools in separate classes, if resource teachers were available for support. Teachers also sought government support for training, financial incentives and provisions for inclusion in the educational policy.

Hussain and Javed (1997) attempted to develop a plan for the mainstreaming of children with hearing impairment. They observed that inclusion of these children in regular classrooms was acceptable to many education experts in Pakistan. The strategy for inclusion, however, varied from one expert to another. They found that the special education experts, who were administrators and senior teachers of children with hearing difficulties, were not ready to accept that there were deep-rooted and widespread negative effects of special education institutions on the education of children with hearing impairment. According to the researchers, implementation of inclusive education needed proper orientation for regular classroom teachers. Special schools were ready to initiate mainstreaming in their school (reverse mainstreaming). The local context of special institutions was often threatened, politicised and overprotective in connection with innovative plans such as inclusive education.

In another study, Gondal (1998) sought the opinion of university students. They did not consider blindness to be an impediment to receiving an adequate education since it did not affect the understanding or thinking of these children. However, they were apprehensive that blind children might suffer from an inferiority complex if they were taught in mainstream schools because the education system is not well equipped to meet the needs of these children.

The perceptions of university teachers about the academic capabilities of children with hearing difficulties revealed that teachers believed children with hearing disabilities could develop reading, writing, mathematical, social and vocational skills like other children with appropriate training (Wahid and Ishfaq, 2000).

Naz and Aurangzeb (2002) found that Muslim scholars and leaders believed it is the duty of society to provide appropriate education to children with disabilities in inclusive environments. The society has an obligation to meet the educational and life needs of disabled people by providing equal opportunities to education and employment.

From a study of the impact of the media on attitudes to disability, Wajihullah and Saeed (1998) reported that the media have not been successful in portraying people with disability positively, and have not changed negative attitudes in the public. Similarly, Sharif and Naz (2002) found that print media had not changed public attitudes to people with hearing difficulties.

It is clear that lack of awareness and education among the general public have been mainly responsible for the misconceptions and negative attitudes towards disability. Parents have mixed opinions about supporting education in special schools and inclusive education settings, whereas most teachers are in favour of providing education in special education settings. This is perhaps as a result of the lack of proper training and perceived barriers to dealing with the diverse needs of children in ordinary schools.

LEGISLATION AND NATIONAL POLICIES

In 1972, the country witnessed a revolutionary change in the education system when the government nationalized all private institutions including private special schools. The Education Policy 1972 allocated funds for providing special education services for the first time in Pakistan.

During the 1980s and 1990s, a strong international movement driven by the UN for the rights of children with disabilities had a far-reaching impact on the government policies of member states. This period, known as the Decade of the Disabled (1983–92), generated increased awareness about disabilities in Pakistan. At the same time, General Zia-ul-Haq, who had a daughter with multiple disabilities, was also concerned about the education and welfare of disabled children.

The Decade of the Disabled and the interest of the government led to the rapid establishment of special education centres in the country. In 1985 alone, 46 special education centres sprang up in all provincial capitals and some small towns (Mirza, 1996). The control of special education institutions was shifted from the federal Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Health. The Directorate of Special Education was established in 1985.

The following national institutes were proposed during this period to provide technical support to the special education centres run by the federal government, provincial governments and NGOs.

- National Institute of Special Education to coordinate and provide educational training programmes for teachers, professionals, parents and managers.
- National Institute for the Handicapped was developed for early detection, diagnosis, assessment, treatment facilities, and surgical intervention and research.
- National Technical and Vocational Training Institute for the Disabled to coordinate technical and vocational training facilities for disabled children, and to train exceptionally gifted disabled children in special or exceptional skills.
- National Library and Reprint Service providing multidisciplinary information services.
- National Trust for the Disabled.
- Computerized Braille Press for reproducing books in Braille on a large scale.
- National Talking Book Library for the recording of syllabuses/textbook on cassettes.
- National Sports Club for the Disabled to organize national-level competitions and extra-curricular activities as well as exchange and observation visits.

EXAMPLES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- Factory for production of hearing aids and a workshop for fabrication of ear moulds.
- Factory for production of limbs and aids.
- National Speech Therapy Centre.
- National Board of Examinations for Disabled Children up to higher secondary classes.
- National Media Service for the Disabled to develop educational and extra-curricular materials and programmes for the media.
- National Institute for Statistics and Census of the Disabled to collect, maintain and update statistics for all disabilities, and to design and conduct census of the disabled at regular intervals.

Of these 15 proposed institutions, only the first five actually started functioning.

National Policy for Rehabilitation of the Disabled (1986)

A National Policy for Rehabilitation of the Disabled was formulated in 1986, focusing on integrated education. Children with disabilities were prepared for and rehabilitated into mainstream schools. Ordinary schools situated in the vicinity of special schools were to be identified and requested to admit children with special needs along with other children. Strong arguments were given in favour of integrated education in the policy, which states that 'integration will enable normal children to be aware of human diversity' and 'children accept individual difference more speedily than adults' (Directorate General of Special Education, 1986). A need for specialized training of teachers to impart knowledge and skills capable of achieving integration was also highlighted in the policy.

Although integration of children with disabilities in regular schools was an important focus of the National Policy for Rehabilitation of the Disabled, it could not be effectively implemented. There was a good deal of resistance among mainstream schools and special schools. Coordination was lacking between mainstream schools and the institutions working for children with disabilities, such as the government, the special education institutes, and NGOs.

National Policy for Education and Rehabilitation of the Disabled (1988)

The National Policy for Rehabilitation of the Disabled was revised in 1988 as the National Policy for Education and Rehabilitation of the Disabled. A significant philosophical change in this policy is indicated in its title, which for the first time included the word 'education'. The paradigm of the right to education replaces the earlier charitable disposition towards the disabled. In fact, this policy deviated from the previous policy by raising serious questions about the philosophy of integration. It states that 'it must be recognized that integrated placement for any child is a means to achieving a desirable goal. It must not be regarded as an end in itself. As a process, integration requires adequate level of skill and professional support for each child. Integration is not a realistic goal for all children even in the most sophisticated system of provision. At the present time, it is a realistic goal for only a small group of people who currently attend special education centres.

Whilst such units [integrated units] have been successfully developed in other countries, the model may not be widely applicable to Pakistan' (Ministry of Health, 1988).

The policy made provincial governments responsible for establishing special education centres in rural areas. Furthermore, the policy directed that the curriculum for children with special needs should follow the guidelines of regular schools. Only priorities in learning and pace of progress might be adjusted, according to the needs of the child. The heads of such institutions were made responsible for designing and implementing the curriculum, according to guidelines set by the federal government. The policy also differentiated between teaching strategies that cater to differences among children. It emphasized a special institutional methodology for children with special needs.

The implementation of this policy in 1988 created a segregated system of special education in Pakistan for the next 10 years. The political instability that witnessed four changes in government caused an interruption in the efforts of international organizations to promote inclusive education in Pakistan. For example, each of the four governments tried to design and implement a new education policy according to its party manifesto. Policy decisions were limited to Islamabad, and were not implemented.

The policy of 1988 succeeded in creating a reasonable quality of service for students with special needs within a segregated system. Services in these institutions were far better than services in many government schools for regular children. Huge model special education complexes were constructed in federal and provincial headquarters and other big cities by the federal government. The 1993 statistics state there were 210 institutions for four types of disability—mental retardation, hearing impairment, physical disability and visual impairment—with an enrolment of 12,475 students (UN, 1993).

National Policy of Special Education (1998)

In 1998, the National Policy of Special Education was promulgated to various special education institutions. The government admitted that the policy document of 1988 could not be implemented in part for the following reasons: non-availability of adequately trained and qualified professional/para-professional staff; inadequate allocation of budget so that purpose-built premises could not be completed at national, provincial and divisional/district headquarters; low priority given to the sub-sector of special education and social welfare; lack of community involvement and support; inadequate transport facilities for pick up and drop off of disabled children; and non-availability of specialized aids and equipment (Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education, 1998).

National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2002)

As the title of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities indicates, by 2002 special education had been subsumed into a generalized policy for the disabled. The philosophy of inclusive education is not articulated, and there are no policy guidelines. In fact, the Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education does not play any role in the policy formulation of regular schools. Neither does it have any administrative control to implement an inclusive education policy. As far as the role of the Ministry of Education is concerned, the National Education Policy for 1998 does not include any mention of special or inclusive education.

Any government-level initiative for inclusive education must start with a special education section in the Ministry of Education. This will shift the responsibility for providing appropriate education as a right to all children, including children with disabilities, to the Ministry of Education; this would be the most appropriate place for design and implementation of a policy on inclusive education. Special schools run by the Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education can continue providing support to children with severe disability for the time being.

ROLE OF NGOS

Several NGOs at local, provincial and federal level are working for the rehabilitation of people with disabilities. These NGOs have been established either by individuals with disability or by disabled associations. However, they focus on a single/particular category of disability rather than all categories of disability.

Model special schools are run by NGOs in every large city in Pakistan. A study conducted by Nawaz and Raza (2002) found that NGOs provide a range of services to all who need them irrespective of gender, religion, ethnicity, race, disability or socio-cultural background. There is active coordination among them at the local level to pool their resources. NGOs were found to be flexible, and have great potential for starting inclusive education.

ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector has also emerged as a strong force to expand and improve educational services for students with special needs. All good practice models in special education identified by this study are in the private sector (Hamza Foundation Academy for the Deaf, Lahore; Amin Maktab for Mentally Retarded Children, Lahore; Pakistan Society for the Rehabilitation of Disabled for Physically Handicapped Students, Lahore; Dewa Academy for Deaf, Karachi; Ida-Rieu School for the Blind and Deaf, Karachi; ABSA School for the Deaf, Karachi). These schools are spacious, financially sound, and have good physical and educational facilities. The government provides partial financial assistance and comprehensive professional support to these institutions. Funding also comes from Bait-ul-Mal, and national and provincial trusts for people with disabilities. All these developments have markedly changed the standard of special education in Pakistan during the last 20 years.

DEBATES ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In 1994, the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca called for inclusion to be the norm with the guiding principle that ordinary schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.

In Pakistan, opponents of inclusive education argue that the government and the international community are attempting to popularize the provision of inclusive education, while professionals and society are still not ready. They feel that the professionals responsible for formulating the policy are mostly international experts who are ignorant of the situation prevailing in the country. They feel that foreign ideas and policies are being imported with no regard to how they will be implemented. They also feel that it is impractical to try to install inclusive education within an institutional infrastructure that does not exist. Teachers, administrators, professionals and parents appear to be aware of the concept of inclusive education, but are unsure about its implementation in ordinary schools, and are uncertain of its impact on schools and children.

The proponents of inclusive education feel that the government's goal of education for all cannot be achieved when there is no policy directed at the 10 per cent of children with mild and severe disabilities. 'Disabled children living in institutions are particularly vulnerable to neglect, and to physical and sexual abuse. Those children who are totally dependent on caregivers in daily life will be most at risk-the very young and female disabled children, in particular. When abuse takes place, children isolated in institutions have no one to help them complain or defend themselves' (Save the Children, 2002). Such negative experience necessitates the need for including children in ordinary schools where children can live with their families.

There are 106,275 primary schools in the public sector in Pakistan with 278,051 teachers (Bureau of Statistics, 1998). The Ministry of Education will have to make essential modifications to the school environment, adapt the curriculum for special needs, and train teachers to build their capacity for undertaking the challenge of inclusive schooling. For this, sufficient financial resources, new infrastructure and a new vision of education for all are crucial elements. The Institute of Educational Development (IED), an affiliated institute of AKU, Karachi, is working for the promotion of inclusive education in Pakistan, and provides training to teachers on adjustment so that all students can learn in the same class.

It is often argued that the financial impact of this gigantic plan on the poor economy of Pakistan will be unbearable. Proponents of inclusive education argue that it is more expensive to set up special schools than to train existing teachers, and provide learning aids for children with disabilities in regular schools. Construction of ramps and classroom rearrangement can be accomplished within limited budgets.

However, interviews with policy-makers and consultants working at the federal level in special education reveal they are not convinced of the efficacy of initiating inclusive education in Pakistan. They argue that the idea of inclusive education is alien and impracticable in the Pakistani context. A fear is evident among interest groups that inclusive education may end the current special education set-up. Some are trying to protect the special education system instead of recognizing the importance of their contribution to building the capacities of mainstream school administrators and educators to practice inclusive education. Some argue that without awareness in the community, training of teachers and provision of appropriate resources, it is not practical to adopt inclusive education.

A separate ministry has been established for the purpose of meeting the needs of children with special needs. This has taken up some of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education. However, a much-needed coordination policy between the two ministries has yet to be worked out.

FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

A review of five-year plans indicates that financial allocations for the expansion and improvement of special education increased from Rs 10.5 million in 1978 to Rs 58 million in 1988 to Rs 699 million in 1998 (Table 2 and Figure 1). However, inflation during this period caused a substantial decline in the value of Pakistani rupee, so allocation in real terms may not have increased so dramatically.

Funds allocated for special education in five-year plans

Figure 1

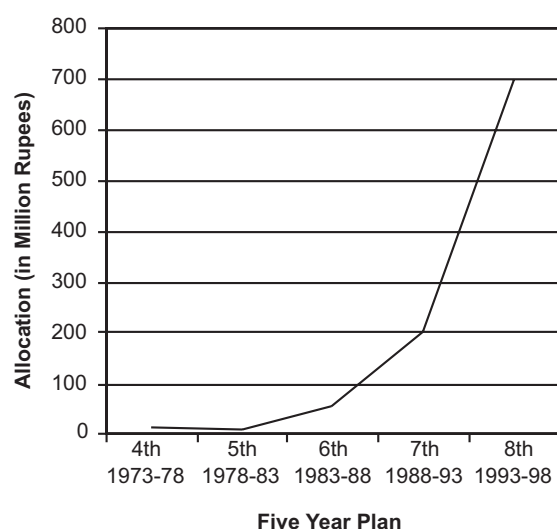


Table 2

Plan	Duration	Allocation (in million rupees)
4 th	1973-1978	10.5
5 th	1978-1983	8
6 th	1983-1988	58
7 th	1988-1993	200
8 th	1993-1998	699

Increased expenditure on special education has resulted in improvements in the quality of services, higher enrolment, impressive physical facilities and provision of qualified teachers. However, it has perpetuated a segregated special education system. It is less expensive to accommodate children with disabilities in regular/mainstream schools than in segregated schools. With minor cost increases, an inclusive education system can be introduced in a regular school. Funds are required for teacher training, assistive devices, modifications to the physical structure, and reorganization of classrooms. These changes can create a positive impact on all children, including those with disabilities.

EXAMPLES OF WORKING MODELS

The study brings together a series of good practice models for inclusive education. It attempts to increase the knowledge base and enhance capacity to improve existing programmes. It would be premature to label the inclusive schools selected for this study as good practice models. These schools were selected because of their pioneering attempts to take up the challenge of educating children with disabilities and accommodating them in ordinary schools. They have created opportunities for including children with disabilities in mainstream schools by creating a welcoming environment for all children. However, the good practice models presented here need to be strengthened and made more child- and disability-friendly.

12.1 International School of Studies, Karachi

The International School of Studies is an inclusive school that operates from a rented building in Hill Park, Karachi. The initiative for providing inclusive education came when a few parents with children who were declared unfit for mainstream schools approached the administration of the school.

Established in 1995, the school is open to children of lower, middle and high socio-economic classes. Currently, most students are from middle-class families living around the school. Minorities such as Hindus, Parsi and Christians have equal opportunities for admission. These students constitute one per cent of the total student population of 1000. There are 70 per cent boys and 30 per cent girls. About 6.25 per cent are children with disabilities. The fee structure for children with special needs is flexible. It is based on the parents' means. The school charges Rs 400–1500 per month for regular students. The average fee is Rs 1000. The school has no other means of fund-raising. As a consequence of financial limitations, the school does not offer an outreach programme.

Accessibility for special needs

Students come from a radius of 10 km and use a school bus for Rs 500 per month. Students with disabilities are allowed to use their personal transport. In the school, toilets, washbasins and drinking water are accessible to all children. However, the school does not have disability-friendly ramps. Currently, there are no children with severe mental retardation or severe visual impairment studying in the school as teachers lack the required skills to work with these children. In future, the school plans to provide the appropriate facilities, and work with teachers to improve their skills in handling children with other disabilities.

Environment

The school is housed in a newly constructed, multi-storey building with a neat and clean environment. Parents of children with special needs and the community have a positive attitude towards inclusion. Teachers are sensitive and have a welcoming attitude towards children with special needs. They frequently adjust their teaching strategies, presentation of content, and assessment procedures according to the requirements of children with special needs. For example, diagnostic probes and teaching are used to supplement instruction, and the presentation and response modes of assessment tools are modified according to the needs of children.

Children with disabilities are seated near the teacher so that they can be helped at any time. Children are seated in semi-circles, allowing flexibility for moving and facing each other and the teacher. There is easy mobility in the classroom.

The environment is gender-sensitive, and respect for female teachers and girl students, particularly those with disability, is valued as the norm. Girls have separate toilets, dressing room and female teacher assistants. All children are friendly, irrespective of their disability, gender and socio-economic status.

Learners

The school provides inclusive education services to all children, including six with hearing impairment, 10 with mild mental retardation, eight with physical impairment, three with visual impairment (low vision), 15 with learning disabilities, and 20 with multiple disabilities. The ratio of children with disabilities to normal children is one to 16, and the ratio of girls with disability to boys with disability is one to four. Some children with disabilities excel in a particular academic area, and are an example to other children. The school provides referral services (available outside the school) for children who require speech therapy and physiotherapy. The school also provides medical and counselling services to children with special needs. Parent-teacher meetings are held quarterly.

Teachers

There are 72 teachers in the school; 90 per cent are female. The teacher-to-student ratio is one to 14. Most teachers do not have a special education background; one teacher has received short-term training in special education in the United States. Some teachers have been trained privately through workshops arranged by READ and Comic Centres. Teachers have a reasonable understanding of disability and its implication for the education of children. They believe that inclusive education is beneficial for disabled children, and that children enjoy the process of learning through innovative techniques. No particular disability creates any major problem. Teachers are supported professionally by resource teachers within the school (on a contract basis). They are able to solve day-to-day problems in working with children with disabilities. This help is generally confined to curricular and instructional learning activities, and assessment strategies. Teachers seek help from professionals both in the class and out of class. The school ensures that such help is easily and quickly available. Teachers respect the rights of all children. Although teachers have no formal training in teaching children with special needs, most have the

aptitude to manage children with diverse needs. They have developed their skills through short workshops and on-the-job training.

Curriculum and learning materials

This school runs from Class 1 to A levels, and follows the curriculum prepared by the Oxford University and Sindh Textbook Board. The curriculum for children with special needs is modified according to the needs of an individual and the type of disability. The classroom teacher, under the guidance of a mentor who is professionally qualified, makes the modifications. These modifications generally relate to the selection and presentation of the content for teaching, and the assessment of the student. Books issued by the Sindh Textbook Board are modified for children with special needs. There is no specific curriculum for these children. The pace of teaching is slower in the inclusive classroom as substantial time and effort are put in for children with special needs. Some parents of children without disabilities complained about the slow pace of instruction but they were informed that the school's policy on inclusive education could not be compromised. Staff members consider these to be initial problems of inclusive education, and that they are rectified over time. Parents soon realise that all children benefit from the modified learning strategies.

Enlarged text and objects with high-contrast colours are used for teaching and concept formation by children with low vision. There are workbooks, drawing books and pencils, reading books with coloured pictures, and large-font printed material.

Teaching–learning process

The use of varied and flexible teaching approaches allows all children, including those with disabilities, to learn at their own pace. Teachers plan active forms of learning, simulation exercises, role play, and use workbooks, drawing, and other forms of class work to provide opportunities for children to learn at their own pace. The school curriculum also includes sports (such as karate), music and drama. The method of assessment is based on an individualized education plan.

Children with hearing difficulties are taught the total communication method (lip reading and sign language). Children with mild mental retardation attend remedial classes to improve the pace of study. The children with other disabilities are also referred to special classes when there is a need. Remedial services such as occupational therapy, counselling, crisis management and mobility are provided by the school, whereas physiotherapy, hearing assessment and devices, speech therapy, and corrective devices for visual impairment are mostly arranged externally at Ma Aysha Memorial Center (a special school). Parents pay for the cost of such services but they are not obligatory for those who cannot afford them.

Learning outcomes

The level of performance of children with disabilities is satisfactory. The achievement differential between disabled and other children is marginal, except for the mentally retarded. Most special needs children overcome their disability through extra effort. The level of interaction and

participation of all children in sports and social programmes organised in the school is high. As the inclusive practice grows, it is expected that children will start interacting more with each other academically too.

Supervision

Supervision for teachers is supportive and flexible. The administration acknowledges the challenges faced by teachers and recognizes their inputs. The academic achievement of children is not the only indicator for measuring a teacher's accountability.

Problems and constraints

- The school is housed in a rented building and cannot make the required permanent physical modifications to improve accessibility and provide laboratory facilities.
- There are limited funds available for expansion and improvement of existing facilities, and for assistive devices such as hearing aids, magnifying glasses, etc.
- There is a lack of trained teachers with a special education background.
- The salaries of teachers are low and often their stay in the job is comparatively short. Therefore, the school is reluctant to invest in professional development for teachers.
- The government has no specific plan to support inclusive schools.
- Parents face difficulty in sparing time for providing the required support to their children.

12.2 Collegiate School System, Lahore

The Collegiate School System was established in its own building in Shadman Colony, Lahore in 1986. It is a co-educational school offering education from Montessori to matriculation level. Girls and boys share the same classroom and learn together. The school's clientele is from the middle and lower-middle classes. Admission is open to children of all religions. The school utilizes its own resources; no grants or donations are received. The fee varies according to the means of families; some students pay no fee. Some scholarships are offered. The school was initially set up for children without disability, but when two children with physical disability applied for admission the school administration found it unethical to refuse them. The school administrator is a lawyer by profession dealing with human rights cases; he is sensitive to the issues related to educating children with special needs. The community and parents of all children, including those with special needs, welcome the inclusive educational practices of the school.

Accessibility for special needs

Children with special needs commute to school from up to 10 km using their own transport. It is the parents' responsibility to take children to and from school. Modifications such as ramps,

steps, toilets, etc. have not been made to the school physical environment. Students and staff help children with special needs move around and use essential services. The school plans to provide some of these facilities in the future. Children with special needs are admitted after selected cognitive tasks.

Environment

Children with special needs interact happily with their peers. They are provided with a safe school environment. There is respect for race, gender, ethnicity, language, social background and varied ability levels. All children are seated in the same classroom in a row-by-row arrangement. Children with disabilities and others can easily move in the classroom.

Learners

A total of 450 children study in this school, and about half are girls. Most children are Muslims; a few come from Christian (5) and Parsi (1) families. There are 16 children with special needs (3.5 per cent of the total); one is hearing impaired, 14 are mentally retarded, and one is physically disabled. Six are girls. Each class has two to three children with special needs. Overall attendance by these children is more than 75 per cent. There is a resource room for mentally retarded children, where these students spend some time with a psychologist who helps them in their learning.

Teachers

There are six male and 30 female teachers. Teachers interact with each other in the staff room, staff meetings and out-of-school activities. Currently, there is no teacher trained in special education/inclusive education. In the past, however, some teachers with a Master's degree in special education have worked in the school. Most teachers have attended workshops on behaviour modification applied to children with special needs offered by a special school in the city. The school has a full-time psychologist. All teachers have a friendly attitude towards special needs children, and work with children to solve their problems. Parent-teacher meetings are held every two months in which parents of special children are also invited to discuss their problems. The focus of these meetings is on the problems of the students, and counselling and guidance for parents on common points. No parent has ever objected to the inclusion of special needs children.

Curriculum and learning material

The school structures its own curriculum. It selects textbooks from those that are commercially available, keeping in view parents' desires and market demand. The school curriculum is adapted according to the special educational needs of children with disabilities. The school does not provide any language training or audio-visual aids for these children.

Teaching–learning process

The teacher is assumed to perform pre-determined functions assigned by the school administration. She/he is free to adapt the curriculum for disabled children but cannot deviate from the curriculum determined by the school administration for non-disabled children. The nature of learning is passive as teachers use one-way communication: teachers lecture and students listen. There is emphasis on learning by rote. The method of assessment is based on an individualized education plan prepared for each student with special needs, setting out short- and long-term objectives.

Learning outcomes

Level of performance of children with disabilities varies. No child with special needs has been able to matriculate from this school. Some students have left to join special education institutions. Children with special needs also participate in school functions such as drama, festivals, fun fair, debates, prize distribution, etc.

Problems and constraints

Lack of funding is a major problem; the school cannot pay high salaries and cannot provide audio-visual aids to special needs children. Special education professionals do not stay permanently. Some parents of special needs children are unable to provide adequate time for school-initiated activities.

12.3 Parvarish School, Lahore

The Parvarish School operates in its own building in an affluent area in Gulberg, Lahore. This school provides services to children with and without disabilities at primary level (Pre-Nursery to Class 5). Established in 2000, the school is open to children from the middle and upper classes; most are middle class. The school is open for children of all religions but, currently, all students are Muslim. There are 50 per cent boys and 50 per cent girls. About 14 per cent are children with special needs. Community support for children with special needs is limited but positive. The fee structure for children with special needs is flexible and based on parents' means. The school charges Rs 1500–1650 from regular students. Some students are offered a 50 per cent concession. There are no other means of fund-raising. The school administration has tried to generate funds through donations.

Accessibility for special needs

Students commute to school from up to 10 km away using their own transport. There are no ramps in the building. Students are admitted to the school on the basis of the type and severity of their disability. Amin Maktab (a special school) and the Special Education Center of the College of Home Economics refer children with mild disability for admission to this school. Students are placed in grades according to their performance.

Environment

The school is housed in a multi-storied building with a neat and clean environment. The environment is also gender-sensitive.

Learners

The school provides inclusive education services to children with mental retardation, learning disabilities and hearing impairment. Of the 70 students, 10 children have a disability. The attitude of other students toward children with special needs is caring and friendly. The school arranges speech therapy for children on additional payment. The attendance of students' with special needs is 100 per cent.

Teachers

There are 10 full-time and three part-time teachers. All full-time staff members are female. The teacher-to-student ratio is one to five. All teachers interact with each other in the staff room, staff meetings and out-of-school activities. Teachers do not have special/inclusive education backgrounds. Some have attended workshops offered by Amin Maktab, a special school. Teachers are mostly trained in-house. All teachers have attained a Bachelor's degree; some have a Master's degree. The teachers' attitude towards special needs children is friendly, welcoming and supportive. Teachers are also sensitive about the rights of all children. Parent-teacher meetings are held monthly. The head teacher is a qualified woman who provides professional support to teachers whenever needed.

Parents

Teachers discuss students' problems and their progress with parents in meetings of the Parent Teacher Association. No opinion has been voiced by parents on the issue of including special needs children in the school. Parents have accepted it as a natural process.

Curriculum and learning material

The school follows the curriculum prepared by the Oxford University and some locally prepared workbooks. The curriculum and instructional materials for children with special needs are modified according to the needs of an individual child and the type of disability.

Teaching-learning process

An active learning process is followed in the school. Assessment is criterion-based, using students' strengths and shortcomings to establish desirable achievement. Students are able to progress to a realistic goal. Assessment is based on the progress of each child in each subject. Special needs children are offered an extra four hours a week as additional support for their learning.

Learning outcomes

The performance of children with disabilities varies from case to case. There is limited interaction between children with special needs and others in the playground. The participation of children with special needs in the school's social programmes is high.

Supervision

Supervision is flexible, and the attitude towards children with special needs is caring. According to the owner of the school, staff members behave with each other like a family. Teachers are supervised and evaluated through active and frequent interactions with supervisory staff. Coordinators and section heads monitor assigned duties and progress.

Problems and constraints

The only major problem is a lack of funds to pay appropriate salaries to staff. The school is trying to raise funds through alternative sources so that concessions can be provided to students. There is a lack of assistive devices and other developmentally appropriate teaching and learning materials.

12.4 Hassan Academy, Rawalpindi/Islamabad

Hassan Academy was established in 1993 in a rented building situated in Meharabad, Rawalpindi by a medical specialist who was also trained in special education. The school runs an inclusive education programme for Nursery to Class 6. It also provides residential accommodation for both disabled and non-disabled children.

Accessibility

Some disabled children are provided with transport, while others use their own transport to commute to school. Students not only come from Rawalpindi/Islamabad but also from other cities and countries (Murree, Peshawar, Karachi, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, etc.). The fee structure is flexible and based on parents' means; the hostel fee is Rs 4000 per child. Well-off parents are encouraged to support needy students financially through the school. As a result, students coming from low-income groups succeed in gaining admission.

Environment

The school environment is friendly and supportive to students. This has developed their confidence.

Learners

There are 70 children with disabilities (six are slow learners and 64 have hearing impairment) studying with 60 children without disability. The age of these children is from three years to 13 years. Admission to school is not based on the socio-economic status of the parents. About 35 students are accommodated in the hostel.

Teachers

There are 13 teachers; three are male. The educational level of these teachers varies from school completion to post-graduate. All teachers have had the opportunity to attend short courses from the National Institute of Special Education in sign language, speech therapy, etc. Teachers are paid from Rs 2000 to Rs 5000 plus a transportation allowance.

Teachers' meetings and parent-teacher meetings are scheduled monthly. Parents of children with and without disability are invited separately to these meetings as the school feels that the problems of the two groups are different. On social gatherings, all parents are invited jointly. All parents are well disposed to inclusive education. Teachers' attitudes are friendly, welcoming and supportive. Children with hearing impairments are provided with medical facilities, speech therapy and hearing assessment services. The involvement of parents is minimal.

Curriculum and learning material

The curriculum is the same for all children with slight modifications for disabled children. For boarders, there are evening classes where children with hearing impairment are taught the Punjab Textbook Board curriculum (in Urdu) and others follow the Oxford curriculum. The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education holds special examinations for children with hearing impairment based on the curriculum prepared by the Punjab Textbook Board. No such facility is available in the Oxford curriculum in Pakistan. Hifz-e-Quran is a compulsory component of the curriculum.

Teaching-learning process

Students are active participants in their classes; there are discussions, teacher-initiated discourses, and other instructional activities. Assessment is made monthly on the basis of written tests. The school also maintains individual records. The attendance of special needs children is between 50 per cent and 75 per cent.

Learning outcomes

The science teacher reported that children with hearing difficulties do not have problems in understanding science concepts; their performance is on a level with their peers.

Problems and constraints

The problems felt by the administration are related to lack of funds, a rented building, transportation and lack of professional training of teachers. The school is still unprepared to provide education for children with every type of disability. Teachers have received only short training inputs as the school is reluctant to provide long-term professional training, as the turnover rate of teachers is high. The school cannot attract children with disabilities from distant areas of the city, as it does not have a school bus.

12.5 Association for Rehabilitation of the Physically Disabled, Peshawar

The Association for Rehabilitation of the Physically Disabled in Peshawar was established in 1985. Its mission is to promote rehabilitation services for people with disabilities, mainly in rural areas, small towns and suburbs. The association helps in creating awareness about the physically challenged in the community, advocates for their needs, and networks for promoting their inclusion in society.

The association runs a resource centre, the Rehabilitation Center for the Physically Disabled, providing low-cost physical and vocational facilities to people with physical disabilities, provides educational opportunities through inclusive education practices and use of Montessori methods, and creates awareness through the dissemination of disability-related publications. It also networks with similar NGOs at the national and international level, and makes provisions for education and job placement to handle other related issues.

Rehabilitation Center for the Physically Disabled

The Rehabilitation Center for the Physically Disabled was established in 1985 in the semi-rural periphery of Peshawar (Umeedabad, Swati Gate, Peshawar). The major activities of the centre include the following.

- Physical and vocational rehabilitation.
- Collection and dissemination of disability-related information.
- Community action in urban slums and rural areas.
- Consultancy, advocacy, counselling, referrals and networking.
- Training, orientation programmes, awareness generation and outreach activities.
- Running a group of women with disabilities called Power (Promotion of Women's Empowerment and Rehabilitation).
- Running a Montessori and inclusive education school.

- Enhancement of community-based rehabilitation programme through Rehab Pakistan (an initiative to reach rural, disabled children through local NGOs).
- Working with landmine casualties, making them physically and economically self-sufficient.
- Providing vocational trainings to people with disabilities in carpet-weaving, tailoring and embroidery, bicycle repair, electric repair, lathe-machining, plumbing, welding, and providing training for functioning as a community-based rehabilitation worker.
- Arranging health training for rural women. In 1998, training in health care and prevention of childhood disabilities was provided to 3000 women in five towns.

The Inclusive Education School

The Association for the Rehabilitation for the Physically Disabled has links with various international donor agencies. This linkage gave birth to an inclusive school for children with special needs. Fifteen children (six girls) with disabilities study alongside 31 other students. The major objective was to reach the unreached by giving them the opportunity for education. No fees are charged. Students come from extremely low socio-economic backgrounds. The ratio of boys to girls is 50 to 50. All students, except two, are Muslim. Admission is offered on a first-come-first-served basis. The school provides a range of facilities from medical treatment to physiotherapy. Students walk to school from nearby villages and generally do not use transportation.

There are five teachers, mostly disabled themselves, with no training in special/inclusive education. All teachers (four men and one woman) work on a voluntary basis. Educational qualifications range from secondary school completion to Master's level. The teacher to student ratio is about one to nine. Educational services are offered from Nursery to Class 3. Students are helped with physical access (ramp, staff help, etc.). Teachers as well as parents of both disabled and non-disabled children have a positive attitude towards inclusion.

Community leaders also support the idea of inclusion and give their encouragement. They feel that such schools can develop a sense of equality, and ensure a proportionate share to marginalized groups in social development. The community supported the acquisition of land at a low rate near the school's old building after the old landlord had refused to sell the land. The community also helped in constructing link roads to the school, and in acquiring equipment and materials. The school management approaches the community on religious grounds; this has been successful for fund-raising. This school is located in a province that is religious in nature and has little class differentiation.

The school environment is safe. The classrooms are located on the ground floor. Ramps and support bars are provided. A gender-sensitive, caring and friendly environment prevails in the school. Administrators and teachers respect and cater to the needs of all children, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, language and ability. Parent-teacher meetings are held occasionally. Teachers have the opportunity to discuss student problems in staff meetings. A senior teacher, with a long and rich experience of dealing with children with special needs, provides professional support to teachers, and is responsible for holding short learning sessions for teachers.

The school implements the curriculum recommended by the Government of NWFP. Teachers modify classroom arrangements. The school has also made changes such as lowering the height of the blackboard to make it user-friendly for children in wheelchairs. Teachers give extra time to disabled children to complete their work. Teachers make modifications for children with learning disabilities. Lack of funds means the school has only limited learning resources. The teaching approach is curriculum-centred; learning is active. Assessment is based on the individual level of learning of children with special needs. The schedule is school-based. The percentage of children with disabilities acquiring grade-level competence is approximately equal to non-disabled children. Supervision is supportive and friendly, and the attitude to inclusion is positive. The major constraint faced by the school is lack of funds.

This school sets a good example for inclusive schools in rural areas. The strength of the school is that it is functioning with minimum resources, and is in a position to demonstrate how inexpensive local materials can be used to make teaching aids to promote learning. It has also been successful in running a multi-grade, single teacher classroom.

12.6 Amin Maktab (Outreach Programme)

Under the auspices of the Pakistan Society for the Welfare of Mentally Retarded Children, Amin Maktab was established in 1962 as a special education centre. The centre, registered with the Punjab Education Department, was a pioneering effort and has now grown into a recognized centre in Pakistan, with its own building, qualified and well-trained staff, and adequate equipment. It can accommodate 100 children.

Amin Maktab (the outreach programme) was started in 1991 with a staff of four to provide outreach services to the homes of children with mental retardation residing in economically depressed areas. Outreach services started with a survey of children with disabilities from the nearest *kachi abadi* (slum) of Gulberg, Lahore (Gulbahar Colony, Makka Colony, Madina Colony). Children with disabilities, other than mental retardation and multiple disabilities, were referred to special schools. Satisfied with the outcome of the effort, UNICEF agreed to help expand the project and today it encompasses a population of 37,458. There are 19,983 children of less than 16 years, of whom 195 have been found to be in need of help. Teams assessed these children, determined their special needs, and started training their families to look after them.

Amin Maktab offers training (educational, physical, speech and language) programmes for children with mental retardation. It also provides medication and nutritional counselling. Genetic counselling is provided to parents. Outreach teams have trained a number of parents, and now those parents survey homes in their own localities to identify children with special needs. Parents then inform outreach teams of such cases for assessment and intervention.

Amin Maktab also provides milk, light food, nutritional supplements, toys and clothes/materials collected through regular donations.

The success of the outreach programme motivated the society to attempt a transition from outreach to reaching the unreached. The outreach programme was modified to cover the large unreached population of children with disability scattered across Lahore. The inadequacy of resources encouraged the programme to be innovative, and to conceptualise and develop a

modified approach that is open-ended, not area-restrictive, is family- and home-based, and cost-effective. Reaching the unreached involves preparation of an 'individualized family service plan' for mentally retarded children to provide short- and long-term services including medical, psychiatric, nutritional and psychological inputs. Training of the family is provided through regular 'home' visits by programme teams.

12.7 Teacher development initiatives

There are several teacher training institutions in the country. They can be divided into general and special, and public and private. Institutions that prepare teachers for ordinary schools do not offer training for teachers of children with special needs. However, a few years ago, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the University Grants Commission revised the scheme of studies and curriculum of these institutions. A course on the education of children with special needs was added to the B.Ed. and C.T. programme. Furthermore, an optional area of specialization on special education was included in the M.A. education programme. Despite these initiatives, the practice of teacher training institutes has not changed. They still prepare teachers for ordinary schools on the assumption that education of children with special needs will not be their responsibility.

Institute for Educational Development, Aga Khan University

The only exception to this practice is the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development in Karachi, where a module on inclusive education for children with special needs is part of an open-learning programme that has been prepared for teachers in inclusive schools.

The module contains the following materials.

Module handbook: This provides information about the course, its objectives, course outline, methodology, and assessment procedure.

Study guide: This includes information on child development, introduction to special needs, viewpoints and approaches to the education of children with special needs, curriculum adaptation and teaching strategies, and collaboration and teamwork for school enforcement.

Reading package: This supplements the reference material to enhance self-learning by course participants.

Videos: These reinforce the concepts of the module. Two videos show practical examples of inclusive schools.

The module was prepared by a team of consultants (foreign and local). It is currently being revised following feedback received from a reviewer and from distant-learning centres across the country. It is too early to assess its impact on promoting inclusive education in Pakistan.

Department of Special Education, University of the Punjab, Lahore

The Department of Special Education, University of the Punjab, Lahore, was established in 1990 to offer a Master's degree in special education. In 2001, a doctoral programme was initiated to prepare for leadership in the field. The scheme of studies for the Master's degree was revised in 2001 to incorporate the concept of mainstreaming and inclusion. A course on Exceptional Children in the Regular Classroom was added to lay the basis for inclusive education. The Ph.D. programme is open to Master's degree holders in education and psychology. The schemes of studies are tuned in to the philosophy of inclusive education. Several Master's theses completed on inclusive/mainstream education clearly indicate a shift towards inclusive education.

The department provides consultancy services to several departments/institutes of the university where students with disability are studying in an inclusive environment. It also extends consultancy services to other organizations to run inclusive programmes and classes. It runs a rich resource centre on special education. Graduates of this department are encouraged to join 'ordinary schools, and make room for special children in these schools'.

Department of Special Education, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad

The Department of Special Education, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, offers Master's and M.Phil. programmes in special education in a distance-learning mode. Most students are working teachers. It is estimated that 1500 teachers have completed the Master's in special education. These teachers are scattered across the country, and their presence is a great potential for any inclusive education movement in Pakistan. It is believed that they might have already started working with disabled children who by chance have succeeded in enrolling in ordinary schools. The department is also working on a certificate programme in special education for primary school teachers that will be launched in the near future. This programme will hopefully prepare primary school teachers to cater for children with special needs. The department has conducted numerous studies as Master's theses on various aspects of mainstreaming/inclusive education.

National Institute of Special Education, Islamabad

The National Institute of Special Education was set up to initiate inclusive education in 15–20 regular primary schools in and around Islamabad. It readies regular schools as well as teachers, parents and pupils for implementation of inclusive education. It also prepares heads and teachers of special schools for their role in guidance and practical advisory services to regular schools.

It has developed a tool for the identification of special children studying in ordinary schools. It has been tested, and is being improved on the basis of the piloting.

This institute was established with the hope that it will provide leadership to other teacher training institutions; unfortunately, it could not be linked with any university. As a result, the institute has been functioning in isolation from academia. It has become an in-service teacher training college.

CONCLUSION

The concept of inclusive education needs to be understood and conceptualized for changes to be brought about in existing teaching methodologies to benefit all children including those with disabilities. In Pakistan, a nationwide sample of 11–12 year olds reported that only 34 per cent could read with comprehension and over 80 per cent could not write a simple letter. Provisions for quality teaching and learning in the classroom are required to help all children learn together. This teaching involves allowing space and opportunity for each learner to proceed according to her/his ability and pace. It also means using active learning approaches where children learn together in groups through play, projects and various other activities.

The formulation of a national policy on inclusive education is essential to establish the system in the country. 'Planners need to realize that an inclusive education system benefits children from all groups in society, not just children with disabilities. Education policies addressing the needs of all marginalized groups in society are likely to be more successful. Creating policies for separate categories of children is time-consuming, expensive and divisive' (Save the Children, 2002). However, concerted efforts are needed for putting policies into practice. The involvement of both groups of children and young adults in policy formulation and practice is crucial. It will be a long process to change society's mindset on education. The process that will produce a quality education system in the country needs to be planned with care. Mere formulation of policy on inclusive education is not enough to guarantee the well-being and education of children with disabilities. For children with mental or physical disabilities, schooling may be frustrating and unrewarding experience when there is no provision in mainstream schools to meet their learning needs (Miles, 1983). Provision of appropriate training of teachers and administrators, teacher support, and teaching and learning aids meant for both groups of children will incur additional costs that are marginal and in some cases negligible compared to their positive impact on all children.

KEY FINDINGS

On the basis of discussions with policy-makers, heads of institutions, experts and visits to institutions, the following findings have been determined.

- No serious movement has so far surfaced in the country for inclusive education. The present system is of ordinary schools and special schools working in isolation, striving independently for improvement and identity.
- At the federal level, the implications for inclusive education have been recognized in principle, but have not been fully incorporated in practice.
- There is a lack of comprehensive data on the educational status of children with disabilities.
- Even with the help of international consultants, efforts for integration are confined to the small pilot projects with limited scope.
- Some private institutions have become interested in inclusive education. They have started including special needs children in their schools but have not paid adequate attention to disability-friendly infrastructure development, professional training of teaching staff, use of appropriate teaching–learning methods, etc.
- The attitudes of the society, including parents of children with and without disabilities, are generally in favour of inclusive education.
- There is a gap between rhetoric and reality because teachers and administrators employed in special schools are not willing to innovate.
- Government is taking cognizance of such needs; this is reflected in the newly approved National Policy for Special Education. Sufficient funds have been allocated in the next 10-year perspective plan for this purpose.
- There is a lack of coordination between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education for meeting the needs of children with disabilities and those belonging to other marginalized groups.
- The private sector is willing to cater to the needs of disabled children, and is awaiting a constructive plan from the government.
- Some teachers are willing to offer their services, provided they are properly trained.
- It would be premature to label the schools selected in the study as good practice models. These schools have been selected because of their pioneering attempts to meet the needs of disabled children in ordinary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the findings of the study.

- It is important to recognize that research indicates that it is less costly to provide education for disabled children in mainstream inclusive schools rather than establishing special schools. The additional/marginal cost to transform mainstream schools to inclusive ones is minimal and affordable for the government.
- There is a need to improve coordination between of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education with the ultimate aim of shifting the portfolio of education of children with disabilities and other marginalized groups to the Ministry of Education.
- National sample surveys should provide a comprehensive database on the magnitude and educational status of children with disabilities in terms of types of disability, age, sex, location, etc. Care should be taken to involve trained personnel in data collection.
- The private sector has taken a lead in promoting and implementing inclusive education. There is a need to support these efforts by providing grants from the government and international donor agencies.
- Departments of special education at university level should be assigned the task of training teachers working in inclusive schools through short training courses and workshops.
- Orientation and awareness programmes should be given to all sections of the Ministry of Education to help plan for inclusion of children with special needs according to international standards. Since this initiative will have some financial impact on the economy of the country, an advanced plan can be prepared for phased spending. Rural primary schools in remote areas should receive preference, and should be encouraged to start inclusive education in the first phase.
- International donor agencies funding social development projects should take up the promotion of inclusive education as a first priority, and provide financial and technical support to the government, NGOs and the private sector.
- There should be legislation that makes it compulsory for every public school to admit all children irrespective of their special needs. However, at the initial stages, severely mentally retarded children or children with severe physical handicaps may be referred to a special school.
- The print and electronic media should be used to prepare proactive perceptions for the community including parents. Various associations working for drama and cultural events can be involved on a regular basis in monitoring how characters and stories project disability.

- Private ordinary schools funded by national and international agencies should be asked to start inclusive education. Furthermore, implementing inclusive education should be made a pre-condition for disbursement of grants.
- In-depth research should be undertaken regularly to investigate the constraints and difficulties faced in implementing inclusive practices in Pakistan.
- There should be coordination among the health units, special schools and ordinary schools. Coordination committees comprising the leaders of these three systems should be established at the district level.
- The education policy of the government should clearly set out the agenda for finding the most practical, cost-effective ways of meeting the needs of all children in ordinary schools.

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